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REMARKS

In response to the Office Action, the Applicant offers the following remarks.

Original claims 1 to 48 were examined. Claims 1 to 8 are currently cancelled. Claim 9 is currently amended. Claims 45, 46 and 48 are currently cancelled. Claim 49 is currently added.

The present patent application now comprises thirty-eight (38) claims: claims 9 to 28 are pending, claims 29 to 44 are allowed, claim 47 is allowed and claim 49 is pending.

No new matter has been added. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the present patent application including the drawings and claims as originally filed. The amendments do not narrow the scope of the claims, nor does the Applicant believe that the amendments are necessary to distinguish the claimed invention from the cited patents.

1. Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

In response to the Examiner's objection with respect to the listing of references in the specification, a Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is being filed today by fax and the Applicant respectfully requests consideration of this Supplemental IDS under 37 CFR 1.97 (c).

2. Rejections Under Section 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1 to 5 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,898,950 (Spyrou et al.). These claims are cancelled, rendering this rejection moot.

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3. Rejection Under Section 103

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 8, 45 and 46 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,815,847 (Holden, Jr.) in view of U.S. Patent 6,108,824 (Fournier et al.) taken with U.S. Patent 6,865,752 (Udelhofen et al.). These claims are cancelled, rendering this rejection moot.

The Office Action also rejected claims 1 to 5 and 48 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,511,250 (Field et al.) in view of Fournier et al. taken with Udelhofen et al. These claims are cancelled, rendering this rejection moot.

4. Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for closely reviewing the claims and for indicating that claims 29 to 44 and 47 are allowed and claims 9 to 28 would be allowable over the cited references if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claim.

Claim 9 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims and allowance of this claim is earnestly solicited. Because claims 10 to 28 and 49 depend from independent claim 9 and include all the features of such independent claims, allowance of these claims is also earnestly solicited.

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Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that each of pending claims 9 to 44, 47 and 49 is patentable and in condition for allowance. Favorable action is earnestly solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the Applicant's undersigned patent agent if any further amendments will expedite the prosecution of the present patent application or if the Examiner has any suggestions or questions concerning this application or the present response. If the claims are not believed to be in full condition for allowance, the Applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner in drafting one or more acceptable claims pursuant to MPEP § 707.07(j) or in making constructive suggestions pursuant to MPEP § 706.03 so that the application can be placed in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Respectfully submitted,



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